

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

APRIL 25, 1896.—Referred to the Committee on Patents and ordered to be printed.

The VICE-PRESIDENT presented the following

LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR, TRANSMITTING, IN RESPONSE TO SENATE RESOLUTION OF THE 16TH OF MARCH, 1896, LETTER FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS, AND ACCOMPANYING UNOFFICIAL REPORT MADE BY A LAW CLERK OF HIS OFFICE REGARDING THE AMERICAN COTTON PICKER, EXHIBITED AT THE COTTON STATES AND INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION LATELY HELD AT ATLANTA, GA.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, April 24, 1896.

SIR: I am in receipt of Senate resolution of the 16th ultimo—

That the Secretary of the Interior be, and hereby is, directed to transmit to the Senate the report submitted to the Commissioner of Patents on the tests and field work of the American cotton picker exhibited at the Cotton States and International Exposition lately held at Atlanta, Ga.

In response thereto I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a letter from the Commissioner of Patents, and accompanying unofficial report made by a law clerk of his office regarding the cotton-picking machine referred to in the resolution.

Very respectfully,

HOKE SMITH, *Secretary.*

The PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE,
Washington April 10, 1896.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Senate resolution of March 16, 1896, requesting that you * * * transmit to the Senate the report submitted to the Commissioner of Patents on the tests and field work of the American cotton-picker exhibit at the Cotton States and International Exposition lately held at Atlanta, Ga. * * *

In response I beg to state that the Commissioner of Patents has not detailed any officer of the Patent Office to make any investigation or tests respecting the field work of the American cotton picker referred to in the Senate resolution, nor has he made a part of the official records of the Patent Office any report thereon.

Upon inquiry I find that an assistant examiner in the Patent Office in a personal note to the representative of the Patent Office, then in charge of the exhibit of this office at the Atlanta Exposition, asked him to examine that machine; that this request was made as between friends; informally and unofficially my attention was called to the views thus expressed by the representative of this office after his return from Atlanta; that subsequently application was made to me for a copy of these opinions

or views by one Thomas R. Morris, the secretary and treasurer of the American Cotton Picker Company, which I declined to furnish because such alleged report could not be adopted as an official report unless the investigation should be ordered to be made by the Commissioner of Patents, and this was not the case. Still the report can hardly be called strictly personal, and I append herewith a copy thereof, but it is recommended that the resolution of the Senate be answered by the Honorable Secretary of the Interior to the effect above stated, with the conclusion that no official report of the character named appears on the public records of the Patent Office.

I herewith return the papers received by your references of March 17 and April 9.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN S. SEYMOUR, *Commissioner.*

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE,
Washington, March 9, 1896.

SIR: While in Atlanta, last fall, in charge of the Patent Office exhibit at the Cotton States and International Exposition, I received a letter from the examiner in charge of the class of cotton harvesters requesting me to examine the cotton-picking machine of the American Cotton Picker Company on exhibition at Atlanta, and to inform him as to the efficiency of the machine, and whether I had heard planters express any opinion as to its merits. I have the honor to make the following statement about this machine:

The American Cotton Picker Company's machine is built under the Campbell patent, No. 542794, and a reference to that patent will give a clear understanding of the machine. The machine, as I saw it, was operated in highland cotton; as to what it will do in lowland cotton, I can not say. This machine was operated several times in a patch of cotton at the exposition grounds. None of this cotton had been picked, and it being late in the season most of the bolls were open, only a few green bolls and leaves, but no flowers, were on the stalks. To show what effect the machine would have on the leaves and flowers or blooms of growing cotton, growing pot flowers, such as chrysanthemums and geraniums, were placed between the stalks of cotton in the rows. The machine was passed over such rows, and it picked the open cotton without any injury to the bolls, leaves, or stalks of the cotton, or to the plants placed between the cotton stalks. This test was made several times in my presence with the same plants, and there was no indication that the machine had passed over them.

Very little of the opened cotton was knocked out of the bolls onto the ground. The representatives of the company claimed that the machine picked as much as 98 per cent of the open cotton. This seems to be a high estimate. From tests that I personally saw, however, I can say that the machine picked about 94 per cent of the cotton. After the machine passed over a row of cotton, the cotton left on the stalks and knocked on the ground was collected and that picked by the machine was weighed separately. These weights showed that the amount not gathered by the machine was less than 6 per cent of the total amount of that picked and unpicked.

In all the tests that I saw, the cotton picked by this machine was fully as clean as the average hand picked cotton that I have seen on the plantations in the South, if not cleaner. I heard several cotton farmers express their surprise at the work done by the machine, while others thought that it might not be a success when used to pick cotton on a large scale. In my opinion, however, this machine, with minor improvements and changes, would be a successful and practical cotton picker.

Very respectfully, yours,

W. A. MEGRATH, *Law Clerk.*

The COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS.